

# Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

May 2016

Bennet Academy  
Joseph Chella, Principal

## Book Picks

### ■ *Milo Speck, Accidental Agent* (Linda Urban)

While searching a dryer for a lost sock, Milo is sucked into the world of giant ogres. There, he makes a shocking discovery—his dad is a secret agent being held prisoner. It's up to Milo, a mysterious girl, and a giant turkey to rescue his father and save humankind from an ogre attack.

### ■ *Roller Girl* (Victoria Jamieson)

Astrid and Nicole have been best friends forever. But when Astrid goes to roller derby camp and Nicole chooses dance camp, they begin to grow apart. Roller derby turns out to be harder than Astrid expected, but she learns to persevere and to make new friends in this Newbery award-winning graphic novel.

### ■ *How to Cook in 10 Easy Lessons* (Wendy Sweetser)

Does your child know how to saute or knead? Each cooking lesson in this book includes recipes with step-by-step pictures.

Your youngster will be making carrot and pecan muffins or macaroni and cheese with cherry tomatoes in no time! Part of the Super Skills series.

### ■ *The Red Bicycle: The Extraordinary Story of One Ordinary Bicycle* (Jude Isabella)

A boy named Leo donates "Big Red," his bicycle, to a group that helps people in West Africa. When the bike arrives in Burkina Faso, it is used to deliver food and medicine and is even used as an ambulance. This non-fiction book includes information on groups that arrange for bike donations.

## It's cool to read

What's cooler than an air-conditioned library in summer? Chilling out with a good book! While school is out, head to the library with your child to stock up, and use these ideas to keep her reading.

### Self(ie) motivation

Combine photography and reading to encourage your youngster to read books everywhere. When she reads in a new place (bus stop, swimming pool, cousin's house), let her take a picture of herself holding the book. At the end of the summer, she'll have a unique memento of books she read and places she visited.

### Read-only zone

Kids love to create and spend time in their own special spots. Suggest that your child make one just for reading. She might put lawn chairs in a shady spot outside or build a fort indoors with blankets over furniture. Have her fill her space

with books and magazines and snuggle up inside to read.

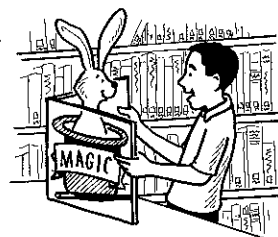
### Book-sharing fun

Encourage your youngster to read to others this summer—she'll practice reading aloud fluently as she helps her community. Check with assisted living homes to see if they can use a young guest reader. Or she might hold story time in the yard for younger neighbors. Even if the books are easy for her, she'll benefit from explaining words and ideas to the little ones. Also, your child may be able to read to dogs! Contact libraries and animal shelters about programs.

## Check out the library!

Exploring the library is a great way to spend summer break. Use this checklist for your youngster to find a different item each time he visits.

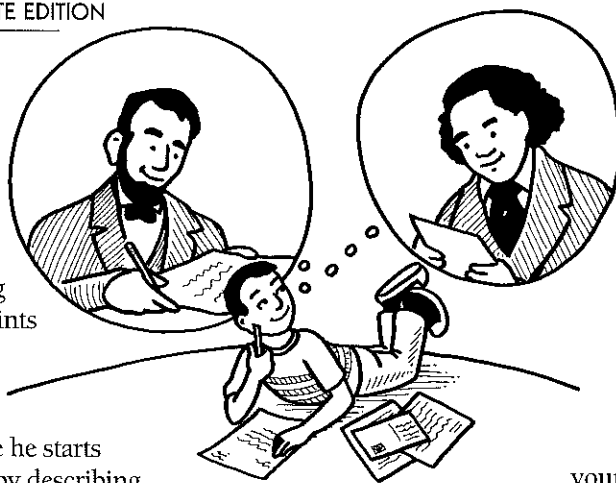
- ☐ **A biography.** Encourage him to borrow a book on an explorer he studied in school or a person with a career he may want someday.
- ☐ **A bilingual dictionary.** Can he learn to say *drums* and *guitar* in Italian or Korean?
- ☐ **A magazine he has never read.** He could flip through one on the environment or one that publishes children's creative writing.
- ☐ **Novels by a writer he hasn't tried.** Suggest that he ask a librarian to recommend an author who writes books similar to ones he enjoys.
- ☐ **A nonfiction book of activities.** He might like a volume of crafts, magic tricks, or science experiments.



## A story of letters

Encourage your child to tell a story entirely through letters, postcards, diary entries, emails, text messages, or tweets. This is known as *epistolary* writing—and it's an interesting way to practice writing from different points of view. Here's how.

Let your youngster invent two characters who will write a series of letters or postcards back and forth. Before he starts writing, he could develop the characters by describing them to you in detail. He should sketch out their ages, appearances, personalities, backgrounds, and interests.



Then, based on what your child knows about his characters, he can write in their voices. Ask him to think about what each writer might say and how he would sound. For instance, what kinds of words would a medieval knight or a 22nd-century scientist use? What format would they each write in?

**Variation:** Suggest that your youngster compose a series of tweets or online posts between historical figures. He'll enjoy imagining how Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass would communicate on Twitter or Facebook. ■

## Parent 2 Parent

### Words for sale

Our family loves word games like Upwords and Word Rummy, and we're always looking for new words to use when we play. My daughter Sienna's recent writing assignment gave us an interesting idea.

Sienna had to pick five words she didn't know and write an advertisement for each one. The ads were supposed to convince her classmates to make the words a regular part of their vocabulary. For example, Sienna's ad for *plethora* read, "Looking for a fun way to talk about all the sunny days we're having or how many pairs of shoes you'd like? Use *plethora*! It's a word that means *abundance*."



Now when we hear or read new words, we write and illustrate ads for them and post them on our refrigerator. We're "sold" on this clever way to learn new words for our conversations—and our word games! ■

### OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children's reading, writing, and language skills.

Resources for Educators,  
a division of CCH Incorporated

128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630

540-636-4280 • [rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com](mailto:rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com)

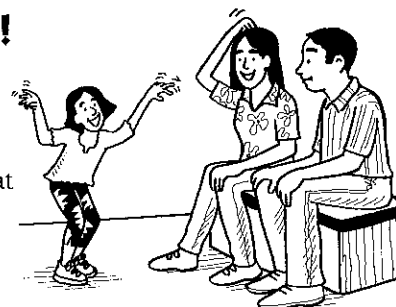
[www.rfeonline.com](http://www.rfeonline.com)

ISSN 1540-5583

## Fun with Words

### Don't take it literally!

Perhaps your youngster has "gone on a wild goose chase" or "killed two birds with one stone." These are idioms—phrases that don't mean exactly what they say. Try this version of charades so your child will understand the meanings when idioms come up in books or conversation.



**Materials:** 10 slips of paper, pencil, bowl, idiom books

Write 10 idioms on separate slips of paper. Examples: "In a pickle," "On cloud nine," "Raining cats and dogs." For ideas, consult a book like *Scholastic Dictionary of Idioms* (Marvin Terban). Together, talk about what they mean. It's fun to think about where they might have come from, too.

Mix up the slips in a bowl. Take turns drawing one and acting it out for other players to guess. The first person to guess correctly keeps the slip. The player with the most slips wins. Then, find more idioms, and play again. ■

## Q&A

### Distracted online reading

**Q** When my son reads online, he spends more time clicking on links than reading. How do I get him to stop jumping around?

**A** Online reading is filled with distractions, but with practice your child can get into the habit of staying focused and reading more deeply.

The "one window" rule is helpful for many kids. Have your son close all other computer windows (games, email, chat), leaving only the one that he's reading. He should

also disable pop-up notifications—they're distracting, too.

Then, if he wants to click on a link within an article or story, he could open it in a new tab. That way, your youngster can stay focused on his reading and switch to the tab when he's finished.

**Tip:** Try installing a free app like

Readability ([readability.com](http://readability.com)) that allows him to

read websites without all the links and ads.

Or consider a browser extension, such as Stay-Focused for Chrome, that limits his access to distracting sites. ■

